



The class began with a Mayan-inspired chant and a vigorous round of coordinated hand clapping. The classroom walls featured protest signs, including one that said “United Together in La Lucha!” — the struggle. Although open to any student at Tucson High Magnet School, nearly all of those attending Curtis Acosta’s Latino literature class on a recent morning were Mexican-American.

For all of that and more, Mr. Acosta’s class and others in the Tucson Unified School District’s Mexican-American program have been declared illegal by the State of Arizona — even while similar programs for black, Asian and American Indian students have been left untouched.

“It’s propagandizing and brainwashing that’s going on there,” Tom Horne, Arizona’s newly elected attorney general, said this week as he officially declared the program in violation of a state law that went into effect on Jan. 1.

Although Shakespeare’s “Tempest” was supposed to be the topic at hand, Mr. Acosta spent most of a recent class discussing the political storm in which he, his students and the entire district have become enmeshed. Mr. Horne’s name came up more than once, and not in a flattering light.

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